

LISTING OF CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A method comprising:

receiving a data signal formatted according to a data communication protocol at a first data communication platform, **the first data communication platform to support one or more data communication protocols;**

determining if the data communication protocol **of the data signal** is supported by the first data communication platform; and

indicating to a second data communication platform, **the second data communication platform to support a data communication protocol not supported by the first data communication platform,** to receive the data signal at a by-pass path of a filter engine of the second data communication platform **to route the data signal through the filter engine without processing by the filter engine** if it is determined that the data communication protocol **of the data signal** is supported by the first data communication platform.

2. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the data signal is a first data signal and the data communication protocol is a first data communication protocol, the method of claim 1 further comprising:

receiving a second data signal formatted according to a second data communication protocol at the first data communication platform;

determining if the second data communication protocol is supported by the second data communication platform; and

indicating to the second data communication platform to process the data signal with the filter engine if it is determined that the second data communication protocol is supported by the second data communication platform.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said receiving comprises receiving the data signal formatted according to the data communication protocol at a network processor.
4. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said determining comprises determining if the data communication protocol is included in a pre-stored plurality of data communication protocols.
5. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein said indicating comprises tagging header information to the data signal.
6. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein said indicating to the second data communication platform further comprises indicating to a network switch engine.
7. **(Currently Amended)** An apparatus comprising:
a first data communication platform to receive a data signal formatted according to a data communication protocol, the first data communication platform to determine if the data communication protocol **is one of one or more data communication protocols** supported by the first data communication platform; and
a second data communication platform, coupled to the first data communication platform, **the second data communication platform to support a data communication protocol not supported by the first data communication platform,** to receive an indication for receiving the data signal at a by-pass path of a filter engine of the second data communication platform **to route the data signal through the filter engine without processing by the filter engine** if it is determined that the data

communication protocol **of the data signal** is supported by the first data communication platform.

8. (Original) The apparatus of claim 7, wherein said first data communication platform comprises a network processor, the network processor implemented in software.

9. (Original) The apparatus of claim 7, wherein said second data communication platform comprises a network switch engine, the network switch engine implemented in application specific integrated circuits (ASICs).

10. (**Currently Amended**) An article comprising:

a storage medium having stored therein a plurality of instructions that are machine executable, wherein when executed, cause a machine to receive a data signal formatted according to a data communication protocol at a first data communication platform of a device, **the first data communication platform to support one or more data communication protocols**, determine if the data communication protocol **of the data signal** is supported by the first data communication platform, and indicate to a second data communication platform of the device, **the second data communication platform to support a data communication protocol not supported by the first data communication platform**, to receive the data signal at a by-pass path of a filter engine of the second data communication platform **to route the data signal through the filter engine without processing by the filter engine** if it is determined that the data communication protocol **of the data signal** is supported by the first data communication platform.

11. (Previously Presented) The article of claim 10, wherein the data signal is a first data signal and the data communication protocol is a first data communication protocol, the article of

claim 10, wherein said instructions further cause the machine to receive a second data signal formatted according to a second data communication protocol at the first data communication platform, determine if the second data communication protocol is supported by the second data communication platform, and indicate to the second communication platform to process the data signal at the filter engine if it is determined that the data communication protocol is supported by the second data communication platform.

12. (Previously Presented) The article of claim 10, wherein said instructions cause the machine to receive the data signal formatted according to the data communication protocol at a network processor, the network processor implemented in software.

13. (Previously Presented) The article of claim 10, wherein said instructions cause the machine to determine if the data communication protocol is included in a pre-stored plurality of data communication protocols.

14. (Previously Presented) The article of claim 10, wherein said instructions cause the machine to tag header information of the data signal.

15. (Previously Presented) The article of claim 10, wherein said instructions cause the machine to indicate to a network switch engine, the network switch engine implemented in application specific integrated circuits (ASICs).

16. (Currently Amended) An apparatus comprising:

a storage medium having stored therein a plurality of instructions that are machine

executable, wherein when executed, cause the apparatus to receive a data signal

formatted according to a data communication protocol at a first data communication

platform, **the first data communication platform to support one or more data**

communication protocols, determine if the data communication protocol **of the data**

signal is supported by the first data communication platform, and indicate to a second data communication platform, the second data communication platform to support a data communication protocol not supported by the first data communication platform, to receive the data signal at a by-pass path of a filter engine of the second data communication platform to route the data signal through the filter engine without processing by the filter engine if it is determined that the data communication protocol of the data signal is supported by the first data communication platform.

a processor coupled to the storage medium to execute the instructions.

17. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 16, wherein the data signal is a first data signal and the data communication protocol is a first data communication protocol, the apparatus of claim 16, wherein said instructions further cause the apparatus to receive a second data signal formatted according to a second data communication protocol at the first data communication platform, determine if the second data communication protocol is supported by the second data communication platform, and indicate to the second communication platform to process the data signal with the filter engine if it is determined that the data communication protocol is supported by the second data communication platform.

18. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 16, wherein said instructions cause the apparatus to receive the data signal formatted according to the data communication protocol at a network processor and to indicate to a network switch engine, the network processor implemented in software and the network switch engine implemented in application specific integrated circuits (ASICs).

19. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 16, wherein said instructions cause the apparatus to determine if the data communication protocol is included in a pre-stored plurality of data communication protocols.

20. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 16, wherein said instructions cause the apparatus to tag header information of the data signal.